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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 16 March 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

It is with grave concern that I must draw your attention to the continuation and intensification of Israel's illegal, massive colonial settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, with all of its negative consequences for the situation on the ground.

In this regard, we wish to place on record our total condemnation of the approval by Israel, the occupying Power, of the construction of hundreds of new settlement units in the so-called settlements of "Gush Etzion", "Maale Adumim", "Ariel" and "Kyriat Sefer" in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The continuation of this illegal, reckless and destructive colonization campaign reconfirms Israel's deliberate policy to breach international law and defy the global calls for the immediate and full cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The persistence of such illegal actions is further destroying the contiguity, integrity and unity of the Palestinian land, further raising tensions, and pushing farther away from reality the goal of the two-State solution for peace.

It should be noted that this declaration to "build more settlements" was made by the Israeli government in specific response to the crime perpetrated against an Israeli settler family on Friday, 11 March 2011. According to Israeli officials, this decision was intended as "a stern political message to Palestinians". This represents only one of the many provocative, inflammatory statements made by Israeli officials in this connection. We completely reject such incendiary statements, which constitute incitement, and reject the illogic and illegal measures being pursued by the Israeli government in the wake of this tragedy. The occupying Power must not be allowed to use such pretexts to further violate international law and intensify its repressive measures against the entire Palestinian population under its occupation.

Moreover, it must be emphasized that this crime has been totally condemned by the Palestinian leadership, including by President Mahmoud Abbas, who clearly

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stressed in an official statement published and broadcast in the media his "rejection and condemnation of all acts of violence against civilians whatever the reasons and whoever the perpetrators". Israel's continued impunity, acting as a State above the law and demonstrating contempt for the law and for those who adhere to it and call for its respect, must be completely rejected by the international community for it threatens to further destabilize the situation on the ground and undermines any chance for credible negotiations to be resumed towards the achievement of a peaceful and just solution that will bring peace and security for both Palestinian and Israeli citizens.

In addition to these illegal plans to construct and expand more settlements, Israeli occupying forces have been raiding Palestinian villages in the vicinity of the illegal settlement where the deadly incident occurred, rounding up males between the ages of 18 and 40 to report for questioning. At least 20 Palestinians have been illegally arrested by the occupying forces as a result of these round-ups. In this regard, it must be stressed that, although the attacker or attackers who perpetrated the killings are unknown, the occupying Power, clearly operating on a presumption of guilt, is deliberately punishing and disrupting the lives of thousands of Palestinian civilians.

At the same time, over the past few days illegal Israeli settlers have stepped up acts of violence and terrorism against Palestinian civilians and their properties throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Settlers have thrown rocks at vehicles on a main road linking the cities of Nablus and Ramallah and set several cars on fire in the Ramallah area and in Qalqilya. In addition, extremist settlers wearing white masks have entered villages harassing and intimidating Palestinian civilians, including children, causing fear and panic to spread among the population. As usual, these illegal actions are being perpetrated in full view of the occupying forces, who continue to fail to hold settlers accountable for their crimes. The occupying Power must be called upon to uphold its responsibility towards the Palestinian population in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and should act immediately to prevent further attacks by settlers, whose illegal presence it has funded, protected and encouraged.

We reiterate that all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, constitute grave breaches under international law and a grave danger to the viability of the two-State solution. The international community, including the Security Council, must act in unison to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to cease forthwith its construction and expansion of settlements as well as the Wall and all other related infrastructure. Moreover, it must be unwavering in its demand that the occupying Power abide by its obligations under international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. This is imperative for salvaging the prospects for realizing the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, which the international community unanimously agrees must be achieved this year.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 385 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 4 March 2011 (A/ES-10/512-S/2011/113), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State

terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations